

Growing Basics of the Faith Leader's Guide

Note:

This study guide assumes that you have already read and or reviewed the basics of discipleship at Breesport Baptist Church and the fundamental considerations when using this material that were presented in the “Knowing” study guide. If you are not familiar with that material, please see Pastor Doug and he can get it to you.

Topic One – A Disciple Grows

Page 6

The author says, “The promise of the Gospel is more than a clean slate with God and the promise of heaven when we die. The Gospel gives us a radical new life now.”

It is essential that your disciple understands that the Gospel is both a “saved from” and a “saved to” proposition. The new believer is saved from the decisive controlling power of sin and the wrath of God, but he is also saved to a new relationship with God and called to a consistent walk with God over time such that they are progressively conformed to the image of Christ.

Romans 8:28–30 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

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The chart of the bottom of the page is very helpful but I would add to it the importance of understanding the fact that all of the spiritual disciples are first and foremost about seeing God in Christ, knowing Him more, loving Him more, becoming more like Him as we see Him, know Him, and love Him which results in the disciples willingness and ability to glorify Him more over time. The disciplines are never about “checking a box” of religious activity. We become like that which we behold.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

So, why read the Bible? Because the Bible gives us the clearest picture of God and helps us know Him in truth. Why pray? Because prayer connects us in fellowship with God. Why worship? Because worship gives us an outlet to express our love and gratitude to God for all that He is and all that He's done.

Page 10

At the bottom of the page the author writes this, "Some people might object to making a distinction between "believers" and "disciples." I would not. A disciple is one who follows, one who is willing to die to themselves, and one who walks by the Spirit. A believer is, at the lowest level, one who simply gives mental assent to a set of propositional truths. A disciple is one who embraces those truths and they dictate the life they live. They are willing to follow even when it's hard, even when it's confusing, and even when it costs them something.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

Topic Two - Love

Page 18-point a.

What does it look like to love an enemy? Consider Paul's instruction in Romans 12:17-21...

Romans 12:17-21 (ESV)

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The idea of "giving thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all" is to conduct yourself, even in conflict, in such a way that an outsider would conclude that you did the right things. An enemy is anyone who refuses to reconcile and desires that the "war" continue. In that case, we are charged with loving them and serving them. The hope is that, in response to your kindness over time, they will come to repentance and seek reconciliation (heaping burning coals on their head). Paul is clear to say that only good can decisively overcome evil. That's what was being accomplished in the Cross.

Page 18-point b.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan perfectly illustrates what I have come to call, “Ditch Ministry.” Ditch Ministry says this, “The very first thing you have to be willing to do to help someone who has been beaten naked, and left bleeding in a ditch by the side of the road, is be willing to get in the ditch with them.” Ditch Ministry is about coming alongside hurting and messy people with the hope of the Gospel and other practical helps in their time of need.

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Love makes room for people who are different.

This section speaks to Romans 14 and what are commonly known as Conscience Issues. A conscience issue is one in which the Bible gives freedom to every believer to determine what is best for them. Note the following points related to conscience issues as taught by Pastor Doug in the Romans series.

- The conscience can be weak and seared. Therefore, it is a reliable guide to the extent that it is Biblically trained.
- Each person must be convinced that what they allow themselves is permissible because it is possible to sin against one’s own conscience and that is a real sin.
- Christian liberties are best practiced in the privacy of one’s own home. Once you do something in public, you must consider its effect on others.
- Love requires that we do not cause another brother to stumble because of what we allow ourselves to participate in.
- We must never compel or encourage someone to do something that their conscience forbids.

Topic Three – Joy and Peace

Note:

Two texts that would be helpful supplements to this lesson would be Psalm 42 and Psalm 46. Please read them in your Bible and consider the following points:

Psalm 42

This Psalm begins in desperation. The Psalmist is going through a severe trial that leaves him desperate for God. He looks back on how his life was in the past and, when compared to his life in the present, he concludes that it was better before. Nostalgia, however, can be a trap. We only have right now to live and glorify God.

Verses 5-6 are key. They give us a four-step process to transform our emotional state of being:

1. Acknowledge your emotions – the Psalmist recognizes that his soul is cast down within him.
2. He questions his emotions. Why are you cast down, O my soul.

3. He commands his emotions. Hope in God. Why? Because he knows that God is his salvation and His personal God. It's important for people to know that they can command their emotions and feel differently. It's often a matter of shifting their perspective.
4. He trains himself to remember God when his soul is cast down. He preaches the attributes and promises of God to his own heart.

In verse 7 he acknowledges the fact that God is sovereign over his circumstances and by verse 8 he is in a better state of mind. That quickly changes in verses 9-10. Why? Because that's how we are at times. We can be in the valley, climb to the mountain top, only to fall back into the valley of despair. So, what does he do in verse 11? He repeats the process of verse 5 to climb back out of the hole. And we do that as many times as necessary.

Psalm 46

This Psalm is meant to illustrate a person's worst day when everything is crashing around them and it feels like their knees are buckling under them. It's important that there is nothing in the Psalm to make us think that the Psalmist's circumstances have improved from verse 1 to verse 11. What we do get is promise and revelation about God.

The promise is that His coming is as sure as the dawn (vs.5). That is a wonderful blessing, but it also means that God may call us to fight through the night. The revelation is found in the fact that God is referred to as the "Lord of Hosts" and the "God of Jacob." The "Lord of Hosts" is God's war name. He is the commander of angel armies. The "God of Jacob" refers to His covenant name as the God who makes promises and keeps promises. Therefore, God fights for us and He keeps every promise that he has made. The result is verse 10 – we can be still and know that He is God.

Topic Four – Patience, Kindness, and Goodness

See included article from John Piper entitled, "Why God Sanctifies Us Slowly."

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The Great Commandments

Mark 12:28–31 (ESV)

²⁸ And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

This passage makes it clear that loving God is meant to be a whole person experience. Even though none of us accomplish that all the time, the question becomes, is that the desire of our heart? Your disciple also needs to understand that he must seek to love people through his love for God rather than apart from it. If we try to love people without loving God most, we will always love people selfishly. We will love them for what they give us or how they make us feel. But when we love God first and we find our deepest needs met in Him, then we can love people unselfishly. We can freely give to them because we need nothing from them to add to our own sense of self (value, worth, purpose, etc.). This is the essence of agape love.

Topic Five – Faithfulness and Gentleness

Note:

This lesson would be an appropriate place to discuss Philippians 4:6-9.

Philippians 4:6–9 (ESV)

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

The apostle Paul gives us a three-step process for changing our thinking patterns. This was identified by Dr. Steuart Scott in his work on *Renewing Our Thoughts*.

1. Pray Rightly (vs.6-7)
2. Think Rightly (vs.8)
3. Act Rightly (vs.9)

Everyone prays but do they pray rightly? Begin and end your prayer with truths about God so that you not only right size God, but you right size your problems. Humble yourself as you make your “supplications” and, in faith, ask Him to write a story only He can write. This kind of pray guards both the heart and mind.

Think about that which is true about God, you, and your circumstances. And do the right things given your present circumstances. The right thing would be defined, at least in part, as what glorifies God most.

Page 46

Pet Peeves – last bullet point on the page

One's pet peeves are almost always associated with the driving motives of their heart or their controlling idols. Dr. Ed Welch has identified twelve prevailing idols:

Pleasure	Power	Autonomy
Peace	Love	Happiness
Significance	Comfort	Respect
Meaning	Control	Success

It can be helpful to ask people to think about what actually made them mad the last time they got angry. Or what do they think about when they have the freedom to think about whatever they want? Or what they fear and why? Or what do they lack that, if they had it, would make them happy or content? These things will reveal the prevailing idols of their heart.

Topic Six – Self-Control

Page 49 – question b.

Self-control is really the Spirit-control of the self. It is obviously a Fruit of the Spirit, but it is fostered through a spirit of dependance, humility, and submission to God. Will power is based on the strength of one's will or resolve. We can white-knuckle our way through life for so long. God doesn't intend that we battle sin in our own strength because we wouldn't need Him and He would get no glory from our victory. We are meant to rely on His grace and strength. Please note 2 Corinthians 12...

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (ESV)

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Note:

The chart on page 53 is very helpful. It is essentially a list of sinful behaviors that are to be put off and godly behaviors that are to be put on. Please note Ephesians 4:20-24...

Ephesians 4:20–24 (ESV)

²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

This text is known as the “Law of Replacement.” It is the way Believers are conformed to the image of Christ over time. We identify sinful and unhelpful patterns in our life. We put them off with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. We renew our minds with the Word to know what it pleasing to God and then we put that on in place of that previous sinful behavior. The New Testament is full of such “Put Off/Put On” lists.

Topic Seven – Forgiveness

Page 56

The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:21-35 (included in the book)

Jesus provides us with two sums of money representing the two different debts that are owed. These are known quantities that can be identified in today’s value.

- 10,000 Talents of Gold. This was equivalent to 20 years wage for a common laborer. This would be about \$42,000 per year, therefore, Jesus speaks to a debt owed to the king of approximately \$8.4 billion.
- 100 Denarii. This was equivalent to 100 days wage for a common laborer. Therefore, this would be about \$16,000 in today’s money.

The point of the parable isn’t to say that the debt owed by one servant to the other doesn’t matter. That’s a real debt. It is to say that it’s not \$8 billion. And if we’ve been forgiven \$8 billion, we can surely forgive \$16,000. No one has ever sinned against us more than we’ve sinned against God and He has forgiven us of our whole debt.

Page 58 – letter e.

I would contend that the answer here, in part, relates to the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement that was introduced in the previous study guide. God has declared it to be legal for an innocent one to die in the place of a guilty one to pay their debt. That was established in Genesis three and codified in the Mosaic Law.

Page 59 – number 3

The personal benefit of forgiving others is that unburdens you from bitterness. Metaphorically it allows the offended person to walk out of a prison cell that is locked from the inside. Bitterness is described as a root (Hebrews 12:15) because, while it may start small, it always grows unless it is cut off. Forgiveness is what cuts it off.

Note:

This chapter has many helpful things to say about forgiveness. I would supplement that with two additional points. First, Forgiveness establishes a covenant between the offender and the offended. The offended person promises to not mentally dwell on the offense not let it be a wedge in the relationship (Ephesians 4:32). They promise to not weaponize it against the

offender nor make it a source of gossip with others. The offender promises to embark on an intentional process of repentance so as to create a safe environment where that sin will not continue to happen.

Luke 17:3–10 (ESV)

³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.” ⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶ And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. ⁷ “Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”

2 Corinthians 7:10–11 (ESV)

¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. ¹¹ For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

The second thing that needs to be understood is what it means to let love cover a multitude of sins. Once again, forgiveness establishes a covenant between the two parties. When someone chooses to let love cover a sin, they need to understand that they are the only one entering into the covenant of forgiveness and they should not expect significant change to occur given the fact that the offender has not entered into the covenant with them. This is best used when you think a person’s behavior is out of character for them. If a behavior is habitual, it is not loving to let love cover it. That problematic behavior should be addressed.

Topic Eight – Overcoming

Page 65 – number 3

This feels like a question a Christian shouldn’t answer. How could we be disappointed or discontent with God, and yet discontent is bound up in every temptation to sin. Notice Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:1–6 (ESV)

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Satan uses three weapons against mankind here:

1. Doubt (vs.1) – Did God actually say...(maybe He didn’t actually say that)
2. Deception (vs.4) – You will not surely die...(that’s a lie)
3. Discontent (vs.5) – God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God...(they realized there was something they didn’t have and they wanted it even if they didn’t know why)

James 1 says that they only reason something tempts us is because there is a desire for it already present in our heart. If we didn’t want it, there would be no temptation to reach out and take it in a sinful way. This would be a good place to review the list of common idols from Dr. Ed Welch on page 6 of this study guide.

James 1:12–15 (ESV)

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Note:

There is a helpful chart beginning on page 66. 1 Corinthians 10:13 is included in that chart. I would encourage you to ask your disciple to memorize that verse along with 1 Corinthians 10:31. One speaks to the fact that we never have to sin and the other speaks to our purpose in life, which to glorify God in all that we do. It’s impossible to both glorify God and sin at the same time.

Topic Nine – Perseverance

A genuine believer will feel conviction for their sin (Romans 7:15-25) which will lead them to repentance or they will experience the discipline of the Lord when they fail to repent of sin. Consider Hebrews 12...

Hebrews 12:5–11 (ESV)

⁵ And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Topic 10 – Discerning God’s Will

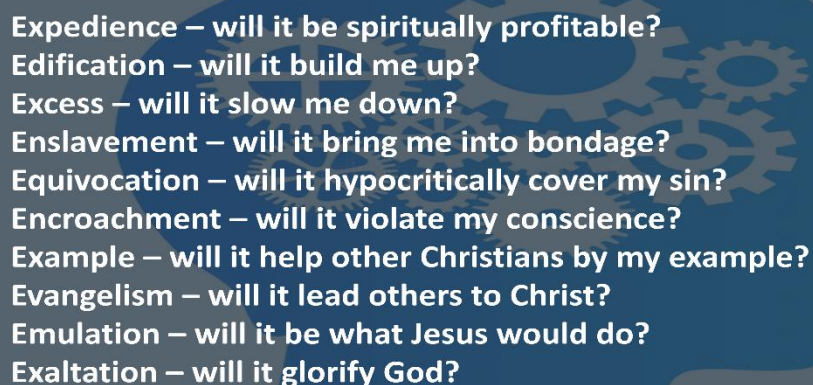
Note:

This lesson has many helpful things to say concerning knowing God’s will. I would supplement it by saying, most of God’s will is found in the moral law established in the Old Testament and repeated in the New Testament. Much of the rest can be discerned through the wise application of stewardship principles found in the Scripture.

Note:

This would be a good opportunity to introduce them to the “E’s of Decision Making” as first outlined by Pastor Josh Jones.

The E’s of Decision Making:

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- Expedience** – will it be spiritually profitable?
 - Edification** – will it build me up?
 - Excess** – will it slow me down?
 - Enslavement** – will it bring me into bondage?
 - Equivocation** – will it hypocritically cover my sin?
 - Encroachment** – will it violate my conscience?
 - Example** – will it help other Christians by my example?
 - Evangelism** – will it lead others to Christ?
 - Emulation** – will it be what Jesus would do?
 - Exaltation** – will it glorify God?

July 13, 2018

Why God Sanctifies Us Slowly

John Piper

Notice the implications of this word *renewed*. We are being “renewed” every day ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#)). If you are being renewed every day, what does that imply? It implies: hope fades, encouragement wanes, your bucket leaks. I find it unbelievably encouraging that the apostle Paul says, “I’ve got a secret, and it isn’t a secret of how never to need renewal. You can have an experience, and you don’t need renewal anymore.” That’s not the message. In fact, the message is unbelievably realistic.

“I’ll never sin again after Jesus comes back. So why am I sinning now?”

Day by day, *renewed*, which means every day you leak, every day you fade, every day you get depleted. That’s what it says. You wouldn’t need to be renewed day by day, if you could run your car on yesterday’s gas, if your metabolism could function on yesterday’s meal, or if the pain in your head can be relieved on yesterday’s dosage. You can’t run today’s life on yesterday’s newness. This is just huge.

Those of you who have been Christians for a while, you just know this. But if you’re a new believer, this is one of the most important things you can learn in your life because it’s so easy to think, with the highs that come with Jesus moving into your life, “I’ve found it. I’ve risen. I’m flying on eagles’ wings.” But soon enough you won’t be. And so you have to find ways to put the air under your wings every day.

And Paul says, “I know how to do that.” That’s the secret I’m after here. I don’t want to lose heart — not a day. I want the secret of being renewed every day — not a week, not a month. Every day I want to figure this out so that I can walk like this. I know life is going to be a battle. That’s the application of “renewed.” So Paul, I really, really want what you say you have. And you say it takes renewing.

This is what Jesus meant when he said in [Matthew 6:34](#) that each day has enough trouble of its own. “Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Have you ever thought about that phrase, “its own trouble”? Like, what is today? Friday. Okay, there’s Friday trouble. Guess what? There’s Saturday trouble. That’s what Jesus said. That’s not like me being a prophet. Each day has its trouble. It’s appointed. There’s going to be Sunday trouble. I’m getting on a plane tomorrow. Maybe the front wheel will fall off. I don’t know.

But you know what else? [Lamentations 3:22–23](#) says the mercies of the Lord “are new every morning.” I don’t know how many years I’ve been using these texts for my soul. On the one hand, every day has its own trouble. But on the other, every day has its own mercies. This

is [Lamentations 3:22–23](#), and this is [Matthew 6:34](#). God has matched them. That's part of the secret. Tomorrow will have its Saturday troubles, and tomorrow will have its Saturday mercies. And those Saturday mercies must be tapped into by the secret here of renewing because I had some mercies this morning, and they're not designed for tomorrow. They were designed for today, and I'm feeling them right now.

“The mercies of the Lord are new every morning.”

Tomorrow there are going to be new mercies, and the secret that Paul's got here is: How do you get under those? How do you get in those? How do you experience those? I paused right here in my preparation. Since this conference is under the banner “Soli Deo Gloria,” to God alone be the glory, I asked God, “Is there something in this text that would just give me a clue for why you set it up this way: that I have to be renewed every day? I mean, you could have just bumped me up to maximum sanctification and kept me there.” You know how I know he could? Because he's going to do it when Jesus comes back. I'll never sin again after Jesus comes back. So why am I sinning now? “I mean, Lord, just do that. You're going to do it then; just do it now.” And he says, “Not the plan.”

“We have this treasure in jars of clay” for a reason — clay that needs to be renewed every day, clay that can't stand on its own longer than 24 hours or on yesterday's grace for 24 hours — all so that the surpassing power will belong to God ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)). You can get in God's face about this and say, “I don't like the plan. I don't like the plan that you leave me unsanctified and battling every day with depletion, having to be renewed on grace every day. I don't like the plan. I'd just like to be done with the battle.”

And God would say, “Well, that's the plan. And the reason it's the plan is I'm going to get some glory in your life. If I didn't do it this way, you'd get uppity about it. You'd think you had it made. You'd think your strength was coming from you. The fact that you've run out of gas every day puts you in the station — and the station is me.”

So, God has his reasons for why he saves us in stages, sanctifies us slowly, and makes us fill up every day at his pump, lest we forget where the gas comes from.